

2



THE CITY OF GROTON

Mayor Marian Galbraith

295 Meridian Street, Groton, CT 06340

(860) 446-4103 (860) 445-4058 FAX

TESTIMONY TO THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE IN SUPPORT OF HB 5460

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MODEL PLAN FOR EMERGING BIOSCIENCE AND PHARMACEUTICAL BUSINESSES IN SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT

March 12, 2013

Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, and members of the Commerce Committee, I am Marian Galbraith, Mayor of the City of Groton and I am here to testify in support of HB 5460 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MODEL PLAN FOR EMERGING BIOSCIENCE AND PHARMACEUTICAL BUSINESSES IN SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT.

The City of Groton is the location of what is today Pfizer's largest research and development hub. It may still be the largest hub but it has been downsized considerably in the past two years. Two years ago, Pfizer had 4500 employees in the Groton New London area. Now there are about 3300. And although somewhere between 350 – 400 jobs were moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, the remainder of those employees, employees who are highly qualified members of the bioscience community were left without employment.

Also left in the wake of Pfizer's downsizing are several buildings which have been vacated including, the building known as 118. Building 118 contains more than 750,000 square feet of prime laboratory, vivarium and office space. The size, layout, and amenities of Building 118 can be retrofitted to accommodate any number or types of users that support bioscience and pharmaceutical uses from a corporate headquarters, to offices for multiple smaller companies as well as valuable lab and general incubator space, which could support new businesses, expanded businesses, and start-ups envisioned by former Pfizer employees. All of which would in turn attract venture capital to the area. This is a building and asset that would be frightfully expensive to replicate and one which can play a vital role in the economic development of our region.

Clearly Southeastern Connecticut is uniquely poised to support the development of bioscience and pharmaceutical businesses. We have the infrastructure and the scientific intellect to support a bioscience industry. We have the location. It's halfway between Boston and New York and accessible by rail and highway and is in proximity to several universities with which companies could form partnerships. In addition we have the region's "Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy", which establishes vital regional projects and action items specific to establishing business campus parks for start-ups and establishing additional lab space for bioscience research. This document was adopted in 2011 and endorsed by the State's Department of Economic and Community Development.

The assets are here, but putting them to good use will require a comprehensive plan and a speedy one. Currently the State, particularly the Department of Economic and Community Development, has been working on a strategy to bring in a developer for Building 118 who is in a position to jumpstart the growth of the bioscience industry by supporting emerging businesses and attracting existing companies seeking the space to expand. This is a critical effort and one which we hope will be successful.

Should it be successful, there will need to be a plan in place to capitalize on this opportunity. A developer would keep the infrastructure in place. The plan proposed by this bill could keep the scientific intellect in place as well. Again speed is of the essence. Before the former Pfizer employees leave the area, we need to support the former Pfizer employees so that they can create the new businesses which will attract investors and perhaps provide jobs for the next generation of scientists coming out of Connecticut's colleges.

Pfizer may be located in the City of Groton, but its impact is felt throughout the region. It's felt in the housing market, in the business community, in our schools, in the nonprofit community. Just as the region felt the effects of the downsizing of Pfizer, the entire region would benefit from the effects of this bill. I urge you to support its passage.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Marian Galbraith".

Marian Galbraith
Mayor, City of Groton